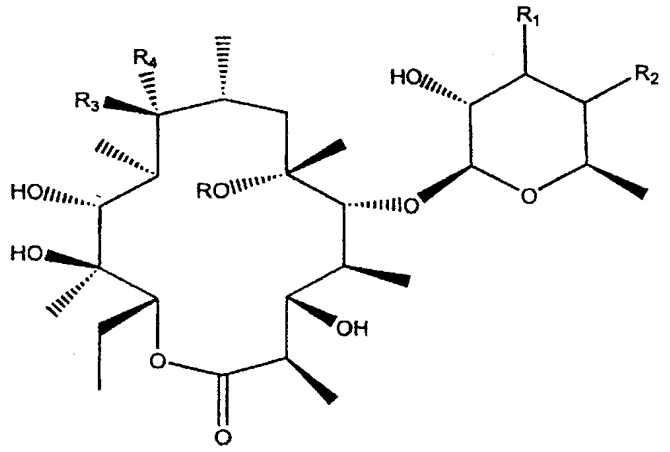
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula

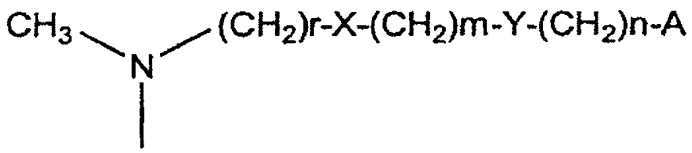


(I)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino(C_1-C_2)alkylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula



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wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole;

X is O or NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a C_6H_4 group or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole; or, when n is 1, NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

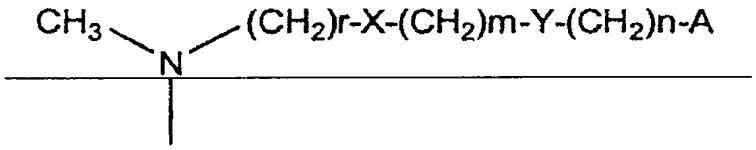
m is the integer 1 or 2;

n is the integer 0 or 1;

or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2

~~R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-di(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group, an N,N-di(C_1-C_3)alkylamino-N-oxide group, an N-(C_1-C_3)alkyl-N-benzyl-amino group, an N-(C_1-C_4)acyl-N-(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino(C_1-C_4)alkylamino]acetyl-N-(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group~~

~~or a chain of formula~~



~~wherein~~

~~A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur;~~

~~X is O, S, SO, SO_2 or NR_6, where R_6 is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C_1-C_3 alkyl, a C_1-C_3 alkoxycarbonyl group or a benzyloxycarbonyl group;~~

~~Y is a C_6H_4 group, a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur or is O, S, SO, SO_2 or NR_6 where R_6 has the meanings given above;~~

~~r is an integer from 1 to 3;~~

~~m is an integer from 1 to 6;~~

~~n is an integer from 0 to 2;~~

~~or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2;~~

R_2 is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with R_1;

R_3 is a hydroxy group or forms a group =N-O-R_5 together with R_4, and R_5 is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C_1-C_5 alkyl, a benzyl optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from nitro, hydroxy, carboxy, amino, linear or branched C_1-C_5 alkyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl groups, aminocarbonyl groups or cyano groups or a chain of formula

$$-(CH_2)r-X-(CH_2)m-Y-(CH_2)n-A$$

wherein

r, m, n, X, Y and A have the meanings given above;

R_4 is a hydrogen atom or forms a group =N-O-R_5 together with R_3, and R_5 has the meanings given above;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof~~,~~

~~provided, however, that~~

~~R_1 is not a dimethylamino group when R_3 is hydroxy, and both R_2 and R_4 are a hydrogen atom;~~

~~R_1 is not a dimethylamino group when in the substituent =N-O-R_5 in the 9 position, R_5 is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C_1-C_5 alkyl, an unsubstituted benzyl group, or a chain -(CH_2)r-X-(CH_2)m-Y-(CH_2)n-A where r is 1, X is O, m is 2, Y is O, n is 1, and A is H;~~

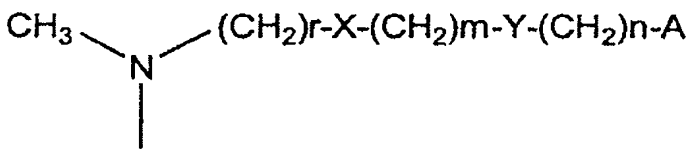
~~R_1 is not a methylethylamino group when in the substituent =N-O-R_5 in the 9 position, R_5 is a linear or branched C_1-C_5 alkyl, or an unsubstituted benzyl group~~.

2. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein the oxime group that may be present in position 9 is of E configuration.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A compound according to Claim 1, ~~Claim 4,~~ wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula



wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole;

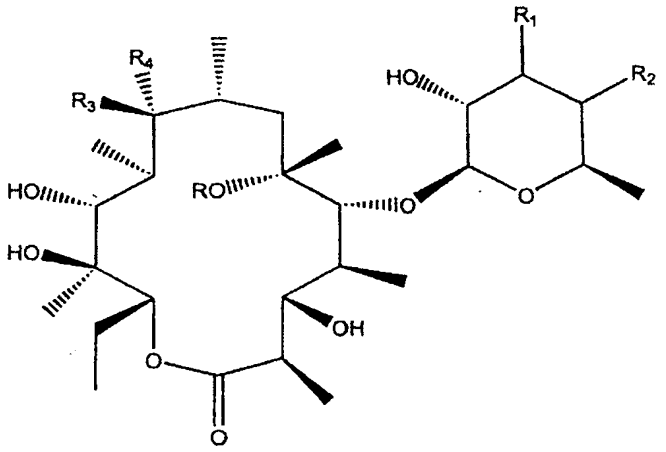
X is NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a C_6H_4 group or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole; or, when n is 1, NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom; or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A compound according to Claim 7,~~ A compound of formula (I):

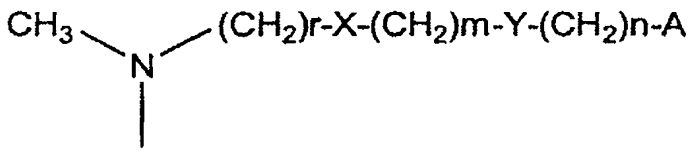


(I)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino(C_1-C_2)alkylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula



wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole;

X is O or NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a C_6H_4 group or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole; or, when n is 1, NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

m is the integer 1 or 2;

n is the integer 0 or 1;

or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2;

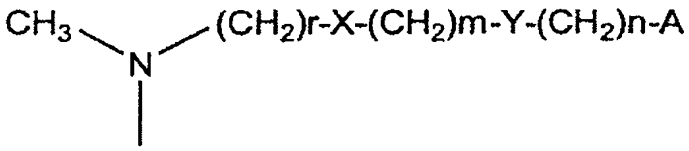
R_2 is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with R_1;

R_3 is a hydroxy group;

R_4 is a hydrogen atom;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

9. (Original) A compound according to Claim 8, wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula



wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole;

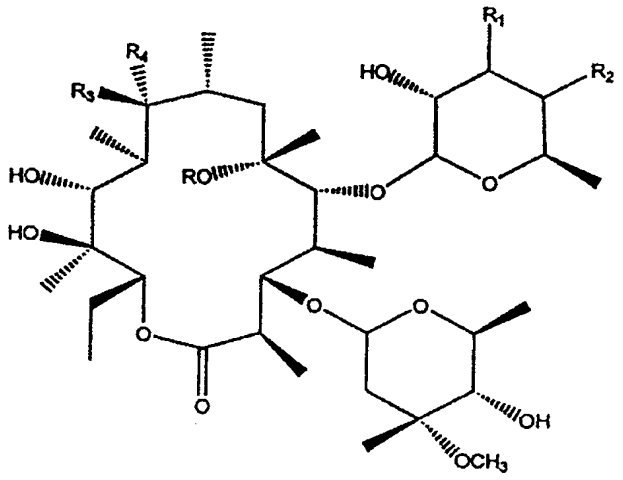
X is NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a C_6H_4 group or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole; or, when n is 1, NR_6 and R_6 is a hydrogen atom;

or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2.

10. - 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) A process for preparing a compound according to Claim 1, characterized in that the L-cladinose moiety in 3 position is removed from the erythromycin A compounds of formula



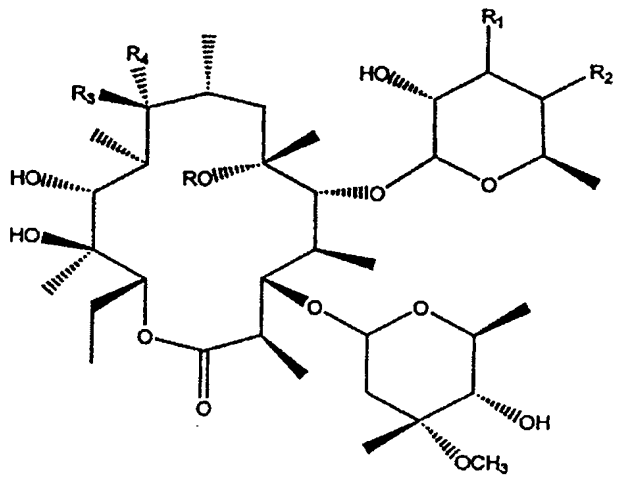
(II)

wherein R, R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 are defined as in Claim 1;
via a hydrolysis reaction.

18. (Original) Process according to Claim 17, wherein in formula II R_3 is a hydroxyl group and R_4 is a hydrogen atom.

19. (Original) Process according to Claim 17, wherein the removal of the cladinose is performed via an acid hydrolysis reaction catalyzed in the presence of a mineral acid and a protic organic solvent.

20. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula II:



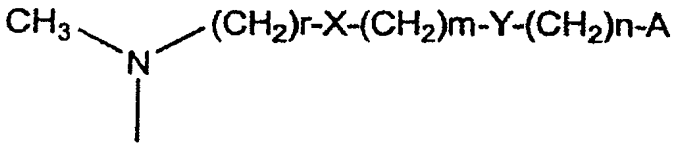
(II)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

R_1 is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-di(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group, an N,N-di(C_1-C_3)alkylamino-N-oxide group, an N-(C_1-C_3)alkyl-N-benzylamino group, an N-(C_1-C_4)acyl-N-(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino(C_1-C_4)alkylamino]acetyl-N-(C_1-C_3)alkylamino group

or a chain of formula



wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur;

X is O, S, SO, SO_2 or NR_6, where R_6 is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C_1-C_3 alkyl, a C_1-C_3 alkoxycarbonyl group or a benzyloxycarbonyl group;

Y is a C_6H_4 group, a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur or is O, S, SO, SO_2 or NR_6 where R_6 has the meanings given above;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

m is an integer from 1 to 6;

n is an integer from 0 to 2;

or R_1 forms a bond together with R_2;

R_2 is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with R_1;

R_3 is a hydroxy group;

R_4 is a hydrogen atom;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

provided, however, that (i) R_1 is not an N,N-dimethyl amino group, and (ii) R_1 is not an N,N-dimethyl amino-N-oxide group when R is a hydrogen atom,

and provided that one of the following limitations is met:

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 forms a bond together with R_2;

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methyl amino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-methyl-N-3-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]propylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-2-[2-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group; and

R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-2-[2-(benzylamino)ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

21. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 forms a bond together with R_2.

22. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group.

23. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group.

24. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methyl amino group.

25. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-methyl-N-3-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]propylamino group.

26. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-2-[2-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

27. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and R_1 is an N-2-[2-(benzylamino)ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

28. (Previously Presented) The compound de(N-methyl)-9-dihydroerythromycin A.

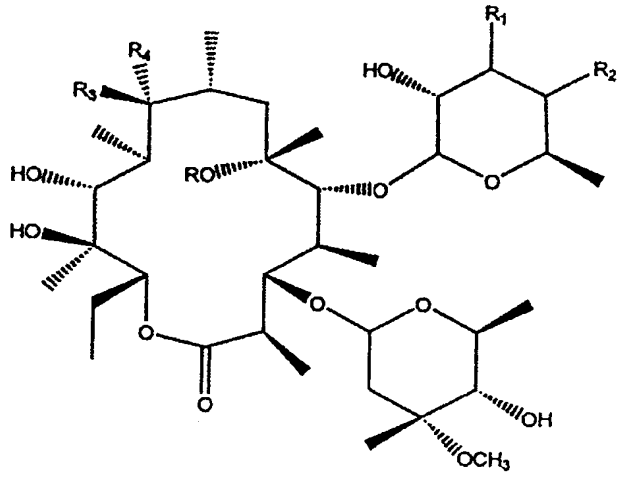
29. (Previously Presented) The compound de(N-methyl)-descladinosyl-9-dihydro-erythromycin A.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (New) A process for preparing a compound according to Claim 8, wherein the L-cladinose moiety in 3 position is removed from the erythromycin A compounds of formula



(II)

wherein R, R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 are defined as in Claim 8;
via a hydrolysis reaction.

34. (Original) Process according to Claim 33, wherein the removal of the cladinose is performed via an acid hydrolysis reaction catalyzed in the presence of a mineral acid and a protic organic solvent.